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INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY China

SUBJECT Development of Localism among Kwangtung Communists

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

1. One of the most important developments in Communist politics in Kwangtung is the increasing tendency toward localism. This phenomenon, familiar under the Nationalist regime, is again beginning to play an important part in Kwangtung politics.
2. At present, most power in the Communist administration of Kwangtung lies in the hands of natives of the East River district.* This district has long been a stronghold of the most powerful landlords, with a resulting strong anti-landlord movement. Most government officials are veterans of the East River Column which was formed shortly after the Communists were forced underground in 1927, and which existed as a guerrilla unit until the defeat of the Nationalists on the mainland. They consider themselves set apart from other Kwangtung natives, and carry on discussions in the Mandarin or Hakka dialects. Now, although natives of other parts of Kwangtung do hold office in the provincial administration, birth and residence in the East River district appear to be the chief qualifications for playing a political role or holding a position, rather than administrative ability or technical competence. Two examples are as follows:
 - a. The student movement at Lingnan University is primarily political, and only students whose views are acceptable to the Communist authorities are allowed to take part. There is, however, one very active member of the movement who knows little about Communist ideology, but she is permitted to participate because she has many friends, who are natives of the East River district.
 - b. The chief of the Kwangtung Province Public Health Administration is a doctor in his late fifties who has served many regimes in Kwangtung, most of the time as an army doctor. Shortly before the Communists took Kwangtung, he went to the East River guerrilla areas and performed medical services for the Communists there. On the basis of his association with the East River Column, he was appointed to his present post after Communist occupation of Canton, although his professional qualifications are very

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limited. He in turn appointed another doctor with purely military experience to be assistant director of the Central Hospital in Canton. This man is also a veteran of the East River Column. The former director of the hospital, a skilled physician and medical administrator, was unable to run the hospital as he saw fit and resigned over the opposition of the Communist authorities. The chief of the Public Health Administration has taken over his duties.

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- * Commander YEH Chien-ying, governor of Kwangtung; FANG Fang, Third Secretary of the South China Sub-Bureau; and TSENG Sheng, commander of the Kwangtung-Kwangsi Column are all natives of the East River district.

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